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GROSSING SWEEPERS

BY

MRS. WILLIAM OLDING.









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'They heard the words "dust to dust," but they knew their mother was with Jesus,'-p. 21.

THE

YOUNG CROSSING SWEEPERS;

OR.

WEE STAN AND LITTLE LLEW:

A TALE OF ORPHAN LIFE.

BY

MRS. WILLIAM OLDING,
AUTHOR OF
'POETICAL WEEKS, A BIRTHDAY TEXT-BOOK.'

SECOND EDITION.

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THE YOUNG CROSSING SWEEPERS.

I.

HER LAST WISH.

In a respectable house, in a small front room up one flight of stairs, lies a woman dying. To outside appearance she is poor, but evidently a lady in heart—if not in position. Witness the taste displayed in the arrangement of her few possessions! And her expression and behaviour also testify to this.

If you inquire, you will find she is a widow, and the two little boys standing by her side—one thirteen and the other seven—are all she possesses in the wide world, except the contents of this one room and a little room at the back.

The floor is covered with a grey drugget; the bed is placed close up against the wall, and covered by a clean white counterpane. Just to the left of the head of the bed is the window hung with green curtains; and outside the window is a wooden box painted green, which the children call their garden. In this we find a damask rose-tree, two Euonymus plants, a few daisy-roots, and some crocus and snowdrop bulbs. A table, covered by a green and black table-cloth, stands in front of the window; and on this table are placed a desk, containing the postoffice savings bank's receipt for £10, a Bible and hymn-book, a work-basket and workbox. Two chairs stand opposite the window, and one by the side of the bed; two little three-legged stools on either side of the fireplace, which is opposite the bed. The washhand-stand is at the foot of the bed, and the door is beyond it.

In two recesses on either side of the fireplace are a chest of drawers, with a lookingglass on it, and a large cupboard, the latter divided into two, the top part of which holds all the crockery, the bottom all the things for use, but not for ornament—brushes and brooms, wood, coal, and paper.

The mantelpiece is adorned with a small black clock, two green flower-vases, and four likenesses—one of the father, one of the mother, and one of each of the boys when quite young. On the wall hang two pictures, one of little Samuel saying, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,' and one of Timothy searching the Scriptures. The contents of the chest of drawers are these. the two small drawers at the top are the lesson-books and the children's few playthings; all that is in daily use occupies the next drawer; the one below is devoted to the Sunday suits; while the remaining one is packed full of clothes of two sizes, all made with great care, to be used as the others are outgrown or too old.

This tells a tale, and a sad one it is!

Between seven and eight years ago the widow's husband, Evelyn Clare, had died.

During his lifetime the family did well, though his mental always exceeded his pecuniary resources. Natural talent and taste for the occupation led him to choose the life of an author; and though from time to time he enjoyed a species of evanescent fame, to say the best of it, it was very transient and transitory. Still, as I said before, they could and did, with economy and management, live comfortably: but when he died, all their resources failed; there was no regular income to meet the rent and taxes they had hitherto paid, and there was but little in the bank to supply their daily needs.

It took no time for Mrs. Clare to decide that they would only just be able to keep together and live with the utmost possible care; so she gave up the house and took two rooms—the one already described, and the other, a very small bedroom for the boys, close behind it. She knew that illness might come, and that, in any case, the little money she had would soon disappear unless she supplemented it in some way; and as she

dreaded most of all separation from her children, she decided to take in plain sewing, and do her best to teach them what she could herself. And under her care and training they both became good Christian boys—the elder one a well-informed boy for his age. But morally they both outstripped the mass of children, and showed an appreciation of the pure and beautiful that bespoke them nature's gentlemen. The elder was a boy of talent as well as heart: both were highly sensitive and refined.

Every day as the mother worked, the elder boy would read to her, and study with her, or by her side, if his baby brother slept or played; but if not, he immediately constituted himself a play-mate or a nurse, as the case might be. For in the mother's work they must find their staple means of living.

Mrs. Clare did not confine herself to secular subjects; with even greater zest she taught the child of Jesus, and read to him, or he to her, from God's Word. And while yet young

he learned to love the Saviour, and to trust Him, even for his mother and his little baby brother—though he found it much harder than to trust Him for himself. He cared comparatively little for himself and his own comfort, but so much, so very much, for theirs; and he felt his responsibility. He had his father's place to fill, without his age or talents—with only his love; but to his mother's heart that compensated for all deficiencies. Oh, what happy times mother and boy used to spend together!

But when little Stanley was nearly six years old, latent consumption began to develop itself in his mother. For a long time Llewellyn could not, would not, see it. It was want of air—she must go out for more walks. If that made no alteration, it was want of sufficient or good food—she must have more and better. And when that proved ineffectual, it was working too hard—they must draw from the bank, and she must take more rest. But when at last the conviction thrust itself irresistibly on him that

it was what nothing could better, and the child felt his helplessness—ah! the Lord only knows what he did feel and suffer! For his mother to leave them! They were only three now, and she the best, the centre of the set. Impossible!—the child thought—impossible!

Some things are so painful, that we try to exclude their possibility by excluding them from our thoughts. But they come all the same with their aching, dreary, wasting longings; they seem to stride like the skeleton of our hopes across the wild wilderness of our lives, making them wilder and more dreary still—more dark through the extinguishing of our cherished ideas. The realisation of these dreads and horrors invariably comes at last.

Yes, and they came to him, and to his baby brother Stan!

It was of no use to struggle; it was there, not a phantom, but a dread reality—death staring him in the face for a whole long year! Ah! no one knows how long a year is under such circumstances till he experiences it.

Llewellyn had experienced it. First there

was only languor and heaviness; then came wasting, and pain, and grief; then watching, anxious watching, and dread suspense; and last of all despair. For she is dying now, dying, and they are taking her last messages, as they stand by her side, and they are hearing for the last time the voice they loved best on earth.

'My boy,' says the mother, 'I leave your little brother in your charge; teach him a little every day. Remember, he is very young: teach him about Jesus. He'll be a good boy. and try to learn; won't you, Stan?'

'Yes, that I will,' sobs Stan; and he looks up at Llew with his great eyes. be very good. Mother.'

'Never leave him, Llew dear, never. thought it all over-anything sooner than that you should part; and that's why I've bought that broom you've asked me so often about. You can't do anything else and keep together. There's only that little bit of money left I told you of, you know where. Take great care of the book, or you'll lose the money.'

'Yes, I will,' sobbed Llew; 'I will, Mother. But don't talk, you're so tired. I'll do all you want; but what about the broom?' said the child in utter astonishment, 'what about the broom?'

'Take a crossing, and sweep it. Be two little gentlemen crossing-sweepers; only, you must sweep, and Stan look on; but keep together always. Take the crossing near the church and by the churchvard-I shall be there. Keep the same; be always there if you can, except Sundays. You'll get on very well in the winter; and in the summersee! I've bought a basket; it's under the bed. I thought you could sell some flowers -some of God's pretty flowers. Sprinkle them with your hand from the pumps as you go along—they are free to all—only keep together. And when money runs short, take out a little-just enough and no more, dear boy-from the bank. Be a little boymother.'

^{&#}x27;I will.'

^{&#}x27;Yes, I know you will,' said the mother.

'You won't be alone—God will be with you both. Turn to Psalm xxvii., verse 10, and read it: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." You'll find that true. Now look at Matthew xxviii., at the last verse, and you'll find there: "Lo. I am with you alway." Remember that; that will be true too. Pray to God every morning and every night; tell Him when you are in difficulty or trouble, and He will help you. He can. And don't forget to thank Him every day, and always. And now take these two texts from me, and never forget them, either of you; begin to learn them to-day-read them now. You must learn them too, Stanley.'

'Yes, Llew will teach me; won't you, Llew? And I'll learn.'

'Yes,' whispered Llew, with a shake of his head for silence—he saw how exhausted his mother was.

'John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 'That is one,' she said. 'You have often heard it before, we have often talked about it together, and you understand it.'

'Yes,' they answered.

'Well, that is one, and the other is in John vi. 37: "Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." There are plenty of others, but never forget these two.'

'No,' said Llewellyn, 'never.'

'Oh yes, there are plenty of others that you taught us of an evening,' said Stan. '"I love them that love Me," and, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."'

'I know,' said Llew, reprovingly, 'I know'
—as much as to say, 'Be silent.'

Death was one thing to Llew, and another thing to Stan; and their mother's death was quite a different thing to the little tried boy from what it was to the baby experience of Stanley.

'And you know plenty of hymns and some tunes,' continued the mother. 'You'll like

to sing sometimes of an evening as we have done.'

'Have something, dear Mother,' begged Llew; 'you're so tired; do.'

'Well, I'll have a little of your beef-tea, just a very little.'

'And three pieces of bread?' said Stan.

And she nodded 'Yes,' and lay still and watched the boys — her own boys, whom she felt she was so soon to leave—get it ready.

And it was a pretty sight to see them do it. They took down a tea-cup and warmed it with water from the kettle; then they took two table-spoonfuls of beef-tea from the jar on the hob, and put the three tiny squares of bread they had cut into it, and gave it to their mother. The word 'they' is used advisedly, for though the elder actually prepared it, he arranged it so that it seemed as if they did it between them.

It was, indeed, a little mother-boy who was left in trust.

She took the cup and emptied it. She

knew it would please the children. Then she said, 'I told you about the clothes in the drawer the other day.'

'Yes, Mother, all about them,' answered Llew, 'and I haven't forgotten.'

'You had better sell the things in the next room, and give the room up; that will pay for my funeral,' she said. 'I have arranged that with your Sunday-school teacher, Mr. Parker.'

'Oh, have you, mother?' said the child, with a relieved expression; 'there will be plenty for us here.'

'The rent is paid up to the end of the month,' she continued, 'and we owe for nothing; that is all, I think. Give my love to Miss Emerton, and bid her and Mr. Parker good-bye for me. Let Mr. Parker know as soon as I am gone.'

And now she said, in Keble's beautiful words, with a look of perfect confidence and quiet repose:

'O Lord, my God, do Thou Thy holy will,
I will lie still;
I will not stir lest I forsake Thine arm.

And break the charm Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast, 'In perfect rest!'

TT.

THE FUNERAL.

THERE was no need to tell Mr. Parker; he had watched too closely, and known too long that the little boys must soon be orphans.

He attended to all the details for them. for they were only thirteen and seven, though they were alone in the world.

Saturday was fixed for the funeral. He thought it had better be over soon. And then the children would come to Sunday School on Sunday, and get to work on Monday, and their grief would not be quite so poignant; they wouldn't feel the loneliness so much.

There was not far to go. The church and the churchyard, and the crossing their mother had chosen for them, were all within a stone's-throw of the two rooms where they lived; so they walked—first the coffin, then the two little boys, and then the Sunday-school teachers. One little band—part on earth—and one in heaven.

Mrs. Clare was buried in her husband's grave, so Llew saw for a moment again his father's coffin. What a big boy he had grown since then! Eight years ago he was only five, now he was thirteen. And Stan saw all that he knew of a father. For he had never known a father alive.

They heard the words 'dust to dust,' but they knew their mother was with Jesus, and that it was only the corruptible part of her they were placing there, till Jesus should raise it again incorruptible.

That didn't trouble them. 'Heaven was her fatherland, heaven was her home.' Llew had written it out on paper for her, and put it as a roll in her hand inside the coffin. It was like a passport for her. How often had she sung to them:

'I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home.
Earth is a desert drear,
Heaven is my home.
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand,
Heaven is my fatherland;
Heaven is my home.

'What though the tempest rage!

Heaven is my home.

Sweet is my pilgrimage,

Heaven is my home.

And time's wild wintry blast

Soon will be over past,

I shall reach home at last;

Heaven is my home.

'There, at my Father's side,
Heaven is my home.
I shall be glorified,
Heaven is my home.
There are the good and blest,
Those I loved most and best,
There, too, I soon shall rest;
Heaven is my home,

'Therefore I murmur not,
Heaven is my home.
Whate'er my earthly lot,
Heaven is my home.
And I shall surely stand
There at my Lord's right hand;
Heaven is my fatherland,
Heaven is my home.'

And now danger and sorrow were past, and heaven was her home.

It was agreed that Stanley should throw the snowdrops they had brought into the grave, but just at the last Llew asked for two or three; he wanted to give her something, or his little heart would have burst. So they were divided, and Stanley liked it all the better, and they both threw beautiful clear white snowdrops in—to the one who was whiter than snow.

They went home differently from the manner in which they came, for now each teacher had a little child by the hand. Miss Emerton was listening to pretty baby-prattle, and soothing it baby-fashion; while Mr. Parker was urging a young lad to cast his burden of responsibility on the Lord, for He would sustain him.

Unknown to the children, a nice tea had been provided for them, and some snowdrops placed in each little vase on the mantelpiece, and a text hung in between little Samuel and Timothy, on the wall, with these words on it: 'Him that cometh to ME, I will in nowise cast out.

The Bible lay open on the table, at the twenty-seventh Psalm; and the bed was ready with a nice new white counterpane on it; and the room was warm, neat, and clean, and a bright fire burned. The Sundayschool teachers had seen to that; and they left the little mourners at the door.

They were very weary, poor little boys: but everything looked so tempting that they took some tea-for 'Stan must have some,' Llew thought.

Then they read their psalm, and 'I'm but a stranger here'-they 'couldn't sing tonight;' then each little boy knelt by the bedside, and told Jesus what he felt, and in a few more minutes they were locked in each other's arms, fast asleep. For 'He giveth. His beloved sleep.'

II.

THE CROSSING.

AFTER they had finished breakfast, Llewellyn said, 'Did you say the prayer Mother taught us—"My Father, be Thou the guide of my youth"—before you went to bed last night, Stan?'

- 'Yes, I did.'
- 'And so did I,' said Llew. 'Let us say it again this morning, and then take the broom and try if we can sweep a crossing, as we promised Mother we would.'
 - 'Yes, let us, Llew; I can carry the broom.'
- 'So you shall,' said little Llew; for he knew it was like a new toy to the child, so strange was the work to them; but he, too, felt—anything better than be separated, anything! So he would try, and perhaps God would send some people by, who would pity them, and give them something. And He did send two: for Mr. Parker made a point of wanting to keep his boots clean that day,

and of course he paid a penny for the use of the crossing; and Miss Emerton thought she must just look and see how they were going on, and that brought another penny. And it so happened that a good many other people gave something, some more than a penny, and none less. So the first day passed very well.

Of course the days varied. On some days they took twice as much as on other days. But no day passed without their earning enough for food.

Once a lady passed in her carriage, and was so reminded by Llew of her own little boy whom she had lost that she threw him a shilling; and ever afterwards she threw something when she passed that way, and what he treasured quite as much—sweet smiles and kind words—very kind words.

'Oh!' she thought to herself, 'if I had been poor and died, and left my little boy in the world like that, what would have come to him! So one day she stopped her carriage and spoke to them, for she felt drawn to them.

more and more, by their apparent love to one another. But when she found that the name of the elder was Llewellyn, her own little boy seemed to plead with her for them from the grave, for his name was Llewellyn, too.

'Llewellyn Clare! what if it had been Llewellyn Seymour, this motherless child!' she thought. And she told them to come to her house the next morning at eight o'clock, and they would find her at breakfast with her little girls Ethel and Mary.

'I have no little boy,' she said; 'Llewellyn, my only little boy, is dead. But I have a warm heart for little boys; the memory of my own dear child keeps that warm.'

Well, they came, and the housekeeper gave them a good breakfast in her own room downstairs; and Ethel and Mary, children of nine and seven, stayed with them while they eat it.

While they were there they took particular notice of their clothes, and thought their own old warm stockings would do for the little one; but what for the elder—the good

little Llew, who took such care of his brother? They must ask mamma.

Llew says he is not cold, his socks are warm enough; besides, walking about so much at his crossing, and sweeping so hard, keeps *him* warm.

'It will be quite enough if Stanley has some. I should like to see him warm; his feet do often get cold, and then he cries, and I don't like that, Missie; Mother wouldn't like that. She always called him her baby, and she told me, when she lay ill so long' (and here he wiped a tear away), 'she told me he must be my baby when she was gone. If Missie is so good, I should like the warm stockings for Stanley;' and his eye sparkled at the very thought of it, more than his little brother's did.

'May we give them now?' said the two little girls together. 'May we, Mamma?'

'No, they must be thoroughly mended first, and the children shall come next Saturday for them.'

Oh! there was joy that day over stocking-

mending even; and they tried hard and mended thoroughly every afternoon for an hour each, and two whole pairs were ready by Saturday—a whole pair each: it was a feat!

But what about the elder boy? Mrs. Seymour could not allow him to go without; it was almost like leaving her own little Llew to the inclemency of the weather. So a walk was agreed upon, and four pairs of nice, warm socks were bought for him, out of mamma's money.

And now there was impatience for Saturday to come on both sides; for Llewellyn knew that his little brother was to have some warm stockings, and Ethel and Mary knew of the surprise for Llewellyn.

It was agreed that each little girl should present two pairs of socks to Llewellyn, and each give separately the pair of stockings she had mended herself to wee Stan.

I cannot tell you which of the four children was the happiest; and, indeed, their mamma looked almost as happy as any one of them. Perhaps little Stanley showed the most pleased surprise—to find his brother had some warm socks too. And now a nice large slice of bread and cheese was given to each little boy, and they set off home.

Oh, what tryings on, what delight! And to think that to-morrow was Sunday! What would teacher say? What would mother say, if she could see? How warm they would be! It was a long time before they could think of anything else—the socks and stockings caused so much excitement.

But at last they took out their coppers, the coppers they had taken during the day, and counted them. They found nineteenpence, and set off to make their purchases. Two such dear little marketers I never saw. Stanley's little hand was of course in Llewellyn's; though, whether the one took it or the other gave it, must always remain a problem. They were always to be seen thus in the street when such close proximity was possible: but at home Llew often sat with his arm round Stan's neck, or with the child

on his knee and his little head on his shoulder; and so they always lay in bed.

It was a pretty sight to see! Two of God's little ones alone in the dark world lighting it up so for one another by love, mutual love!

It was decided between them that eightpence should go on meat, threepence on milk, and twopence on bacon (they always had a rasher of bacon for breakfast on Sunday), fivepence on cheese (they had sufficient coal, wood, and candle in the house), and the other penny was to be saved to buy a 'child's hymn-book' for Stanley; Llewellyn had one.

Faces more radiant with joy one need not imagine; for, to crown all, were not Ethel's and Mary's presents at home?

And the good God was as pleased as the little children; for were they not His adopted children? Had not their mother read in His Word, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive'? And was He not now fulfilling His promise by taking care of them?

The purchases were better and larger than usual to-day, as they were to last till Monday morning, when the first copper could go to buy a roll, if necessary.

Saturday was always one of the days on which they went to Llew's teacher, Mr. Parker; then they had an extra supply of stale pieces of bread, which they put in part of the milk, and supped off; and they had a new loaf.

Arrived at home they lighted the candle, and read. Llew was teaching his little brother to read his mother's favourite text: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' because they both loved that so.

Then Stan was to learn for Miss Emerton 'God is love;' and so they read that several times, and found all the other words in the page like them. Stanley was very pleased that he found such a number of times over 'God;' that came first and was the most easy, because of the large 'G,' they said.

Then he learned to find 'is,' and then 'love.' Then they repeated, as far as Stan knew it, that pretty little hymn:

'God is in heaven, can He hear
A little prayer like mine?
Yes, thoughtful child, thou need'st not fear;
He listeneth to thine.'

And Stan could read some of the words again; for were they not the same as in his text?

When they both knew it perfectly they took hold of one another's hand and knelt down, and repeated together what their mother said to them before she died: they turned it into a prayer:—'Heavenly Father, we have no mother or father but Thee, but Thou wilt take care of us, for mother said so; and Thou art doing it: Thou wilt not cast us out if we come to Thee. We thank Thee for the socks and stockings, and for the sweet smiles we had with them; we thank Thee for all the good things we were able to buy with our money. Mother said the money would come from Thee. Help us to be good boys

Then they rose and went to bed, as happy as all the little children are who feel God is taking care of them, for left to Him they are left to a very warm, loving heart; and He never forgets—never.

When they were in bed, the little one said: 'Oh, Llew, we didn't thank for the penny for my hymn-book that I'm to have to-morrow, don't you know? I'll say it now, 'cause I want that; I've wanted it a long time: so, I thank Thee, heavenly Father, for the penny for the hymn-book.'

And then their heavenly Father watched beside them, and they fell asleep and slept happily till the morning.

IV.

SUNDAY.

STAN was the first to wake, but he lay quite still and thought, till Llew moved: he thought about the socks and stockings, and the text, and the hymn-book, and the meat for dinner, and the bacon for breakfast, and ever so many nice things—waiting all the time very quietly, but very impatiently, for Llew to stir.

At last he did; and after one good hug and kiss, our little boys rose, and dressed in the Sunday clothes their mother had left them.

Poor mother! how she stinted herself to leave those clothes behind her for them. And if she could see them now they are ready for their breakfast, she would not grudge the labour or the deprivation she went through; for they look very nice, respectable, good-hearted boys. Their hair is brushed and combed with mother's brush and comb;

and mother's Bible and hymn-book lie ready for use on the table by their side. But before the breakfast is eaten they make their bed, and open the window, and dust the room, as their mother had so often done when she was alive.

The milk they bought yesterday had to serve for three times, and with a little hot water and sugar to it, it made capital bread and milk for breakfast, and left half for tea; for on Sunday they had milk twice, and a slice of cold bacon for breakfast, unless the times were very bad with them.

Then the good little mother-boy taught Stan his hymn and text for the last time, and read over his own again to feel sure that he knew it. I wish Mr. Parker and Miss Emerton had been able to see them—they would indeed have been pleased.

Then they thanked God for their breakfast, and went to school, with their mother's Bible and hymn-book and the penny; for to-day Stan was to have a hymn-book to himself. If you would like, you shall take a peep with me into their classes, and then you will be better able to understand what they say when they come home again.

Well, let us go into Miss Emerton's class first with Stanley; for Llew has just taken him in, and hung his cap on the peg, while he said, 'Good-morning, teacher,' and took his seat.

There are sixty little boys and girls already on the gallery, and each opening of the door introduces some one more.

Now they are all settled, and Miss Emerton begins.

'The text for to-day is, "Thou, God, seest me!" Repeat it after me—"Thou, God, seest. me!"

What is she doing? She is fumbling in her pocket for something. What is it? Oh! apples. Two tempting rosy-cheeked apples. She holds one up:

- 'What is this, children?'
- 'An apple, teacher.'
- 'It looks a beauty, doesn't it?'

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- 'Yes, teacher,' resounds from every part of the gallery.
 - 'And this?'

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- 'Another.'
- 'Which is the best?'
- 'They are both alike;' 'There is no difference;' 'They are both beauties,' are returned for answers.

She feels again in her pocket, and brings out a knife, with which she cuts them each in half. She asks:

'Which apple will you have?'

Some choose one, and some the other.

'We will look and see whether one is better than the other, or whether they are both as good as they look,' she says.

She opens them and holds them up. One is rotten and bad inside, and the other is good, as good as it looked outside; the core alone is bad.

'They both looked good, children,' says Miss Emerton; 'did they not, equally good?'

'Yes, teacher.'

'Ah, but they were not equally good; God

saw differently. And so He did in the subject before us. Now see this picture,' she said, standing it up on an easel, so that they could all see. 'There are two men here: they have both come up to the temple to pray to God. They both appear to be praying. They look outside as good as one another; they look as the apples did - but inside they are just as different. This one' (pointing to the Pharisee) 'is like the bad apple, different from what he appears; he is like the bad apple. And this one' (pointing to the publican) is genuine, true, as he looks. He reminds me of the good apple, that was only a little bad at the core. Listen to their prayers, and you will see. The Pharisee thanks God that he is not as other men, that he is better; and he tells of all his good deeds. He is proud. He is like the rotten apple. The publican smites on his heart and cries. "God be merciful to me, a sinner." He is humble—he is like the sound apple, the good apple. He felt he was a sinner, and he said so, and prayed God to have mercy on him; and he went down to his house, God says, justified rather than the other. God had mercy on him for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ. I want you to learn this lesson from the two apples and the two men—to be genuine and true: not only to appear to be good, but to be what you appear. And, as the Holy Spirit is the only one who can help us to be good, say, every morning and every evening, "God be merciful to me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ's sake." Has any one of you ever seen an apple-tree?

'Yes, teacher,' from all sides.

'Ah, I thought so; isn't it a pretty tree? I don't know whether it is prettier when it is covered all over with pink and white blossoms, or when the rosy apples are hanging on it just ready to fall, it is so very pretty always. No wonder they make dolls out of the wood of the apple-tree. The apple-tree was God's present to little children, and it's just like them; for though all little children are fresh and fair to look at,

if God doesn't change their hearts they are bad at the core, often very bad, like the bad apple we cut open just now. Solomon loved Jesus very much, and he thought an appletree was so pretty that he compared Jesus to it.* You will not forget the two apples, and the text, "Thou, God, seest me!" And you will not forget the verse of the hymn you have to learn for me:

"God is in heaven; can He see
When I am doing wrong?
Yes, that He can; He looks at thee
All day, and all night long."

Now repeat the verse you learned last Sunday, and I will give you a prayer to say every day, a very short one, and then you shall go home. Repeat it all together with me:

"God is in heaven; can He hear
A little prayer like mine?
Yes, thoughtful child, thou need'st not fear,
He listeneth to thine."

Well, then, say this, "Lord, keep me as the apple of the eye, for Jesus Christ's sake,

Song of Solomon ii. 3.

Amen." You do not quite understand what it means though, do you? I must explain it first. Listen, and I will. Did you ever get a bit of sand or gravel blown into your eye?' 'Yes. teacher.'

'Well, it hurt you very much, did it not? And God sent some tears to wash it away, and make your eye clean again. But some of you never had anything go into your eye to pain you. Do you know why? Can you tell me why? It is because God has so kindly cared for all our eyes. He has put a beautiful cover over the part that would feel the most pain if it were hurt. The part that is so sensitive to pain is called "the apple of the eye." It is in the middle of the eye, and the cover that God put to take care of it

called "the eye-lid." It is edged by a fringe of small hairs called "eyelashes," which form a screen from the dust, or a too bright glare of the light. When we go to sleep these beautiful curtains close, and when we wake up again they open; but if the apple of the eye is threatened with danger,

they close involuntarily to protect it. If God had not put that beautiful cover to keep out the too sudden strong light and the dust, we should have been often in pain, and perhaps we should have been blind; but now, directly the sun is too strong, down comes the lid and closes over the apple of the eye; or if the wind blows the dust our way, without our telling or asking, down comes the cover, and all is safe. The apple of the eye is kept safe by God Himself, by means of His beautiful cover. Now, you see what it means, that little prayer I want you to say. What was it?

'Lord, keep me as the apple of the eye, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'

'It means, Be near me always to keep me from danger, just as near as the eye-lid is to the eye; and always there as the eye-lid is; so that nothing can happen to me without Thy knowing it. God will hear you say it, and He will answer you, and keep you as the apple of His eye; and you will be quite safe and happy, will you not?'

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'Good-bye till next Sunday,' said Miss Emerton. 'You have three things to remember: repeat them after me:

'I. The Text: "Thou, God, see'st me."
'II. The verse of the hymn:

"God is in heaven, can He see
When I am doing wrong?
Yes, that He can; He looks at thee
All day, and all night long."

'III. The Prayer:—"Keep me as the apple of the eye."

'Now we will sing a hymn you all know,' said she:

"There is a happy land
Far, far away;
Where saints in glory stand
Bright, bright as day.
Oh! how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour King,
Loud let His praises ring,
Praise, praise, for aye."

And they did sing—every one: it was a pretty sight. And then Miss Emerton said, 'Let us pray;' and they repeated after her:

'Heavenly Father, we are little children, but we thank Thee that we are Thy little children; every one of us is loved and cared for by Thee. Thou must have loved us all very much to give Thy dear Son, Thine only Son, to die for us. Teach us to love Thee in return. We can each one of us, with truth. say, "Thou, God, seest me!" for we know it by the many comforts we have—friends and homes, and food and clothing. Thou art very kind to us, and very good. Thou dost "keep us as the apple of the eye," so tenderly, so constantly—awake or asleep. We thank Thee and love Thee for it. Help us to try and please Thee all through the week. and let us meet together again next Sunday. to have another happy day; and, at last, may we all meet in heaven, forgiven for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen'

And now they all come off the gallery, take their caps, say 'good-bye,' and go.

But what are they doing in little Llew's class? What was the lesson there to-day? Come and see.

V.

'OH, SO BRIGHT!'

MR. PARKER has just told them to open their Bibles at the seventh chapter of the Revelation of John, and read from the ninth verse. He is reading now himself. 'Listen to what a beautiful description, boys,' he says! 'It is heaven itself: "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."'

('Mother is one, I know,' thought dear little Llew to himself—'how beautiful—how beautiful! She always loved white so; she used to say it was the emblem of purity. White robes! I am glad; and palms in their hands! That's she too; she loved flowers, and palms, and ferns. Oh, I am glad!' But Llew didn't say anything; he only thought it. It was too sacred to utter.)

'Oh, what a beautiful sight to see, boys,' continued Mr. Parker, 'after all we see of sin and impurity, and wretchedness and poverty here. "A great multitude," it says; thank God for that! Then they've got there at last; a multitude so great that no man could number them! Then it was a great multitude indeed! Ah! Jesus was seeing now of the travail of His soul, and being satisfied; for it was made up of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues. Then the poor slave was there, the Chinese was there, and the orphan was there, and the widow was there.'

('Yes,' thought Llew, 'the widow was there.')

'They were all there black and white, and bond and free, from the regions of ice and from every sunny clime, from the little isles and the great continents—they were all there. Where, boys? Where? "Before the throne and before the Lamb," "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

('Oh yes,' I knew it,' thought little Llew to himself, 'that's Jesus: the Lamb is Jesus.')

"Clothed in white robes." boys. "and palms in their hands,"' continued their teacher, 'emblems of purity and victory. For they were victors over sin, and they had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—Read the next verse. Murray.'

"And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," read Murray.

'Yes, what were they doing then, around the throne? Why, they were ascribing praise to God the Father and God the Son, for their salvation; they knew they should never have been there without, and they found now what it was to be there. They had often sung: "Oh, what will it be to be there!" But they had found out now, for "Eye hath not seen. nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." -Read the next verse, Briggs,' said Mr. Parker; and he read:

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God."

'Go on,' he said; and the next boy, Norris, read:

"Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

'Yes, Amen,' said Mr. Parker: 'we feel it even here, no wonder they felt it there. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom. AMEN. and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto God for ever and ever. He is the only One who can use such attributes well, and He can. Amen. Let them remain for ever with Him. No wonder they fell on their faces and worshipped. For what were they to offer praise? They felt their nothingness, they knew their utter dependence on the Lord their God, and on His love: they were worshipping the eternal immutable "I AM."—Read on, Norton; verse 13,"

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?"

'Not from this impure earth, boys, surely, to be so free from stain?—Read on, Cousins.'

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

'Ah, that accounts for it; each one had cried:

"O God, in the stream that for sinners did flow, Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

And though their sins had been as scarlet, they were as white as snow; though they had been red like crimson, they were as wool. They had been in great tribulation' ['Mother had a deal of sorrow,' thought little Llew], no matter for what, perhaps their sins, perhaps their other griefs; but they are safe now: they are saved.—Read on, Gray; verse 15.'

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His

temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

'Yes, Jesus has cast His robe of righteousness over them; they are accepted through Him. And no wonder they serve Him day and night; what could they do besides? What a temple, boys! What a beautiful temple, and Jesus dwelling among them.'

('I know Mother is there. Oh! I hope Stan and I will be there,' thought little Llew. 'Mother's text says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out."')

'Read on, Brown; verse 16.'

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

'Oh! how happy that will be for some of you, my boys; and there are people much worse off than you. Nothing to pain them—not too much sun. The poor little slave will have no more need to cry, "I wish I were but in my grave, and all my labour done." No more taskmasters ['Yes; no stitching and sewing up there, thought Llew,

'for Mother']—no more cruel wasting and want—no more cold—no broken homes no fading friendships—no orphans there.'

('No, there won't be,' thought Llew; 'Stan and I will be with Mother there, and that will be home again. Poor little Stan! how nice!' thought the mother-boy.)

'Read on, Clare; the last verse, verse 17.'

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

'Well, it will be a very happy place, boys, won't it? It must be happy in the presence of Him who loved us enough to die to save us; and of Him who loved us so much that He gave, freely gave, His Son to die for us. No wonder the chapter closes as it does—"and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." And when He wipes away our ears they are gone, all gone even here.'

('Yes,' thought Llew, 'He makes me and little Stan very happy even here. What must it be to be there!')

'Now turn to chapter xxi., verse 4, and listen while I read: "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

'Now the 18th verse: "And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones."

'Now the 23rd verse: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it."

'Now verse 3 of the next chapter: "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face, and there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

'What a wonderfully beautiful description! I never read anything so beautiful

anywhere. Surely a very, very few can ever get there! Do you think that you and I can ever get in there to that beautiful place? Will they ever let us come in?

'Ah! listen while I read! Listen and wonder! Listen and rejoice, boys! For it says in the 17th verse: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come! ['Oh how kind,' thought little Llew.] And let him that heareth say, Come. ['Yes, we may invite others to come,' thought Llew.] And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will ['Stan and I will,' thought Llew; 'how beautiful! I'll tell Stan when I go home!'], let him take the water of life freely!"

'It is a wonderful invitation, boys—to every one of you, and to me too;—a warm invitation, a free invitation, nothing to pay. Let us accept it, all of us!

'Now let us read the hymn for next Sunday:

"We sing of the realms of the blest,
That country so bright and so fair;
And oft are its glories confessed—
But what must it be to be there!

"We sing of its pathways of gold,
Its walls decked with jewels so rare;
Its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be to be there?

"We sing of its service of love,
The robes which the glorified wear,
The Church of the Firstborn above—
But what must it be to be there?

"We sing of its freedom from sin;
From sorrow, temptation, and care,
From trials without and within—
But what must it be to be there?

"Do Thou, Lord, 'midst pleasure or woe, For heaven our spirits prepare; Then soon shall we joyfully know And feel what it is to be there."

'As you learn it, think of the beautiful description of the gathering in heaven which we have read this afternoon, and remember Jesus said: "Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out." So go to Him now for pardon and peace, and soon you will go to Him in glory.

'May God grant His blessing, boys, on our afternoon meeting, and may we all meet in glory to praise Him, for His name's sake. Amen.'

VI.

AT TEA.

STRANGE to say, neither of the little boys spoke a word—not one—till they arrived at home. Each little heart was too full, and each one was meditating on what he had heard in the afternoon at school.

Once there, they mechanically set to work to light their little bit of fire, which they had laid ready over-night; for they never lighted the fire on Sunday till after Sunday School in the afternoon. The grate was nice and clean, for they both knew how to clean a grate. Mother had taught them that, and the old brushes were still there; and little Stan's Saturday grate-cleaning for Sunday afternoon's fire was like painting to another little boy, with the pleasure of seeing the picture afterwards, if it is well done. Then they put the kettle on, which was ready too, and took the remainder of the milk out of the cupboard, and the sugar, and the bread (teacher's bread), and a knife, and put them

on the table. And then they brushed their Sunday caps, and put them away in the chest of drawers that held all their possessions, and drew their chairs up to the front of the fire, to watch it burn, and to have the pleasure of seeing the kettle boil.

'Can't you hear it singing?' said Stan. 'I do.'

'Yes, I hear. Wait a minute, man, and it'll soon boil.'

So the bread was cut up, and put into two cups; then some water was poured on the bread, and the milk was divided, and a little moist sugar added; and they drew up to the table and took their simple tea.

Then came the washing up, which they equally enjoyed. Liew did it, lest Stan should break anything, and Stan looked on; but Stan washed the spoons, because there was no fear of their breaking. Then the table was dusted, and the candle lighted, and they sat down for a happy evening together.

'Oh, we had such a beautiful lesson this afternoon, Stan!' said his brother. 'It was

all about heaven, and how happy they were there: they were dressed in white, and palms were in their hands! Wouldn't Mother lool pretty like that! And they were never hungry, nor thirsty; for Jesus was there and He saw to that. I was so glad for poor Mother, 'cause I think she was often hungry down here, though she never would say so And teacher said that God had wiped away all tears from her eyes; and they were sing ing such a beautiful song. We read it out of the Bible.'

'What song?' asked the little fellow, who had been all attention, without speaking a word. 'What song, Llew? One of our that we sing?'

'No, quite another. I must find it, and read it to you.'

'Do,' said he.

So it was found and read.

'And we had such a beautiful hymn too all about heaven, which I am to learn for next Sunday. I'll read that too. There isn't it'a beauty?' said Llew, when he came to the end.

- 'Oh yes; let me learn it—let me, do!'
- 'Wait, and I will see,' said Llew. 'What have you got to learn yourself? You must learn that first.'
- 'Only one verse, that's here in my new book. I can read it. You taught me last week, you know.'
- 'Well, go on, then. You said that this afternoon. Now comes the new one, I suppose, verse second.'
- 'Yes,' said Stan: "God is in heaven. Can He see?" And I remember "see;" for the text was: "Thou, God, seest me." And the hymn was about "see" too; but I can't read any more till you teach me.'
- 'Well, come along, then,' said the mother-boy, 'and let's see. Well, you know all the first line: "God is in heaven. Can He see?" You don't know the next, but you must think 'of that, and it will get easy. "Can He see when I am doing wrong?" You know "I" in that line?
- "When I am doing wrong?" said little Stan. 'Yes, I know "I," of course; that's only a letter. "When I am doing wrong."

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'Now, look,' said Llew: 'you must know this next word.'

And he looked and said:

'Oh yes; it's the same as in the first verse it's "Yes."

'That's right,' said Llew. 'Well, you don't know the next word. I'll tell you. It's "that;" but you know the next, and the next and the next.'

"He"—"can"—"He," said the little boy, slowly.

'Now, I'll tell you the rest,' said Llew "looks at thee all day, and all night long." And see here; you'll know this next line There's "all," and there's "all" again—"al day, and all night long." That isn't difficult is it? Read it with me.'

And they read it together:

'God is in heaven; can He see When I am doing wrong? Yes, that He can; He looks at thee All day, and all night long!

'Now, over again six times,' said Llev and it will be easy to-morrow.'

'But you haven't told me anything abou

your lesson yet,' said Llew; and off flew little Stan's tongue as fast as it could go.

'Oh, we had a picture of two men praying; one was sorry, and meant what he said: "God be merciful to me, a sinner;" the other was proud, and only thanked God all the time that he was good. They both looked good, but God saw that they were very different. Then we had two apples: just think—two apples! and they both looked good; but when we cut them, one was bad, very bad inside, but the other was nearly good. Then teacher said we never could deceive God, for He could see our hearts, and He knew what we were thinking as well as what we were saying. He saw all that was in us. And then we had a prayer—such a pretty prayer:

"Keep me as the apple of the eye!"

'Oh, how pretty!' said Llew. 'Mother explained that to me once. We'll say that, Stan, to-night, shall we, in our prayer?'

'Yes, let us, Llew; that will be nice.'

And after that the two brothers sang together some of the hymns the little one

knew: 'Around the throne of God in heave.' Here we suffer grief and pain,' and 'There a happy land.'

And then they both had a piece of brea and cheese, and went to bed.

The fire was still alight when they kne together and prayed. Llew spoke the word and Stan said them to himself:

'Heavenly Father, make us fit for The beautiful home in heaven. May we alway remember that Thou, God, seest us. Keep to both as the apple of the eye, and we shad be safe; and be merciful to us both, for we are sinners, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amer

And our dear little boys were soon far asleep, locked in each other's arms.

VII.

MONDAY MORNING.

Monday had come again with its week-da work, but it could not efface the charm of Sunday: that remained.

What a feast of happy thoughts each little boy had: and if they could not talk much together in the day-time, because the crossing must be kept clean, and they must be on the look-out for business, yet they could think in the day-time and wait to talk till evening. But they had a little talk before they rose and while they dressed; and they both knelt, and the little one offered the short prayers which his teacher had taught him, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner,' and 'Keep me as the apple of the eye, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.' And then Llew said. 'Dear Jesus, Thou hast said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out;" we come, Stan and I, as close to Thee as we can now. Some day let us see Thy face, and dwell with Thee, where they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for Thou art the light thereof, because Thou didst die for us. Amen.'

Then they went through their regular morning work, took what little they had left of bread and cheese, and walked off together with their broom to their work.

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But before they started, the little boy mother put their shirts and socks in soal with anything else they had to wash; fo when they came home that was alway Monday evening's work.

In the course of the day, between one and two o'clock, if you had passed that way, yo would have missed our little crossing sweepers. They had chosen a quiet half hour to go to the churchyard near by, and having bought a roll on their way with money earned in the morning, you would have found them seated on their mother' grave, eating it, and talking.

While they were there they had a pleasan surprise; for Mrs. Seymour, who was witl Ethel and Mary, had brought some flowers t put upon her little boy's grave, and so the met.

The first question, of course, was about th socks and stockings, and delighted indeed th little girls were to find them in wear, an fitting so nicely.

Then they asked how the boys had spen

the Sunday, and learned from them some of the lessons they had been taught.

Little Stan was very anxious to tell about the two apples, and the picture, and the new hymn-book; so his brother waited and let him speak first. And then he said his lesson was so beautiful and all about heaven, that Mrs. Seymour felt anxious to hear it; for had she not a little boy in heaven now herself?

But they could none of them stay to talk here, for the boys had their living to get, and Mrs. Seymour must return home to be in time for luncheon with her husband. So it was agreed that they should come up tomorrow evening; then she should hear about Llewellyn's lesson on heaven.

Before they separated, Ethel and Mary begged one flower each from the nosegay for the little motherless boys, which they took and immediately placed on their mother's grave. And they thought the flowers made it look very pretty.

Very, very often the little fellows stole

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away from their work for a few minutes to have a peep at their mother's grave, and many a little gift they received now the Seymours knew them; for they, too, often frequented the churchyard—they, too, had a loved one there.

To-day Mrs. Seymour gave Llew a shilling again before she left, which he speedily decided to set aside for the rent—rent and coals being heavy items with them. They did not fare so badly for clothes, for their mother had made up all her old things for them, working on almost to the last; and their wants were easily satisfied in that respect.

So God fulfilled the promise He gave to their mother, when she left her fatherless children to Him; for as one whom his mother comforteth, so He comforted them, and it was just as if they heard Him saying to them, 'I love them that love Me, and those that seek Me early shall find Me.' They were so happy, dear little boys; there was very little need to pity them.

VIII.

THE VISIT.

DIRECTLY the day's work was over, the boys went home and dressed in their Sunday clothes, quietly took their tea, and set off for Mrs. Seymour's.

Ethel and Mary had been looking out for them some time. They had a number of things ready for them to take back with them, including two more pairs of stockings of their own mending, which (having cost them the most trouble) yielded them the most pleasure.

Then there was a nice meal of meat and bread for them downstairs, with some warm tea; and after that they were to tell all about Sunday.

As soon as the housekeeper brought them upstairs again, Ethel began:

- 'What was so beautiful last Sunday, crossing-boy?'
- 'Oh, I could never tell it,' Llew said, 'it was all so beautiful; it was about heaven.

And teacher said there were numbers there. such a number that no man could count them, black people as well as white, and mothers and fathers, and brothers and sisters, and friends. He said little children were there too, a great many, and that they sang a most beautiful song—all about Jesus and His love; and that they loved Him for it; and that God and Jesus lighted up the place with their glory; and that God wiped away all tears, and they never came again; they never could come there, because there was no more sorrow, or crying, or pain. And then he said people saw His face; and that the city was all gold and precious stones; and, best of all, he said whosoever would might come—for Jesus had died on purpose that we might come. And I was so happy, Missie, I was so happy for I knew Mother was happy there; and I knew Stan and I wanted to go, and Jesus was saying, "Come!" Teacher said we'd got nothing to do but to accept the invitation-any and all of us; that we might all come.

'Yes, it was beautiful,' said the little girls together. 'Then we may come too?'

'Yes, Jesus says so. Mother's text says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and "whosoever" means everyone who will. Mother said so. So you may both come too. Stan and I have told Him we want to come, and have thanked Him too.'

'What the little boy has told you about heaven is all true,' said Mrs. Seymour, looking up from her work. 'Your brother knows that, and I hope we shall all know it some day for ourselves.'

'Was that all your teacher said?' inquired the children.

'No, he gave us a hymn to learn all about heaven, too.'

'If I fetch my book can you find it?' said Ethel.

'I will try,' said Llew. 'It began like this: "We sing of the realms of the blest."'

'Oh, then I can find it myself,' said Ethel.
'I will learn it too.'

'So will I,' added Mary.

'Now give them their parcels and say "Good-night," said Mrs. Seymour.

'Good-night, crossing-boy; good-night, wee Stan,' said the children.

'Good-night, Missie; good-night, Miss Mary,' returned the boys. And they were gone.

'I wish I went to Sunday School, Mamma, said Ethel.

'So do I,' said Mary. 'Might we go, Mamma?'

'I must think about it. Kiss me now, and go to bed; but before you do so, ask Jesus (for His sake) to guide you, and let you both come to heaven when you die.'

'Yes, we will,' said the little girls; and with a kiss and good-night they were off.

'What dear little orphans those crossingsweepers are!' they said to one another as they went upstairs; and nurse heard quite a long account of all that had taken place that evening.

IX.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TREAT.

'Well, Mamma, have you thought about our joining the Sunday School? You said you must think,' said the little girls as they entered the room next morning.

'Yes, I have thought,' said their mamma.

'I hope you have thought "yes," said Mary.

'Have you, Mamma? Have you thought "yes"? May we go? asked both the little girls together.

'Yes, you may go. I have spoken to your Papa about it, and we have decided to try it—that is to say, if the superintendent will let you both be together in Miss Emerton's class. But I am rather afraid, for you are just nine, Ethel, remember, and I think the children only stay there till they are seven or eight, at most. However we will see.'

'Oh, thank you, Mamma; thank you,' said the children. And each one gave a little jump for joy, and rubbed and clapped her hands, as she stood on the hearth-rug in front of the fire.

'We shall be in wee Stan's class,' said Mary; 'I'm so glad. Oh, I do hope Miss Emerton will let you come too, Ethel.'

'So do I,' said Ethel and her mamma, at the same time; 'for remember, it must depend on that.'

'When can we go and ask her, Mamma?'

'Let me see; to-day is Wednesday—not to-day—I must make two or three other calls to-day—perhaps to-morrow.'

So Papa was told, and Miss Oliver, the governess, was told, and nurse was told; and they talked it over a great deal alone, and even dreamed about it when they went to sleep at night—it was such a pleasure to look forward to.

Oh, what if Miss Emerton should say 'no!' They hoped she would not; and Llew and Stan had so often spoken of her kindness, that they concluded she would not. They decided beforehand that she would say 'yes;' and they were right, for she did.

When Mrs. Seymour asked Miss Emerton, and told her how things stood, and what their papa had said, she replied:

'It will be quite an exception, Mrs. Seymour, but I feel an interest in your little girls; they have been so kind to those little Clares that, if Mr. Raynes has no objection, I shall say "yes." So I think we may consider it settled. I will speak to him, and I shall expect them both next Sunday. Let me see; what are your names? she said, turning to the children. 'I think I have heard them—Ethel and Mary. Am I right?'

'Yes,' said each little girl, as her name was mentioned.

'Then, Ethel and Mary, I think we shall soon be great friends.'

'We have learned the hymn for next Sunday,' said the children.

'Which hymn?'

'Oh, "We sing of the realms of the blest"
—Llewellyn Clare's.'

'Ah! but that is not for my class; my children have only one verse to learn: little

Stanley Clare can show you which. But see here,' she said, rising and taking a hymnbook from the table: this is it—the second verse of the sixth hymn—"God is in heaven; can He see?" Can you learn that for next Sunday?'

'Oh yes, Miss Emerton,' they replied, 'easily.'

'That will be very nice; and it will be better still if you could learn the first verse as well, because by next Sunday all the little children will know them both.'

'Oh yes, they can very well manage that,' said Mrs. Seymour. 'I will explain both verses when we get home, and Miss Oliver will see that they know them by next Sunday.'

Well, after three long, long days, Sunday came at last; and the little Seymours were there—and the little Clares too: only, of course, Llewellyn went to his own class, after he had seen his little brother safely lodged.

Some very speaking glances passed between the four children, but that was all, except that Ethel and Mary made a place for wee Stan in between them, and Miss Emerton saw it, but said nothing.

It was like sitting in a garden of roses, thought Stan. And Llew said to himself, as he went away, 'They look as pretty as two primroses and a violet together.'

What a happy teacher, to have such a happy class! All little radiant faces, full of beaming smiles! 'Just the children for Jesus to love,' thought Miss Emerton; and she chose such a pretty text and pretty hymn, and gave them such a pretty prayer to say when they went away.

Ethel and Mary told nurse when they came back that the text Miss Emerton spoke about was 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me;' and the hymn they sang was 'I think when I read that sweet story of old.'

'But what do you think the prayer was, nurse?' they said—'"Lord, suffer us all to come to Thee, and bless us for Thy Name's sake. Amen."

'It was very pretty, and very easy to remember,' continued the little girls.

'And I do so like Miss Emerton,' said Ethel.

'And so do I,' said Mary.

'Then you have enjoyed yourselves, young ladies?' asked nurse.

'Oh yes, nurse, that we have; and what do you think? Miss Emerton said there would be a treat next Wednesday week for the infant class, but she would tell us more about it next Sunday. I am afraid the elder Clare will not be there, if it is only for the infant class. I hope he will, though.'

When little Llew came for his brother after class, the first minute he was outside the door, he told him, too, that there was to be a treat.

'But it's only for our class,' said Stan, 'so I won't go. I'll stay with you.'

Llew guessed why directly, and replied:

'No, you shan't; you must go, and hear all about it, and tell me afterwards. See?'

'I do want to go, but I can't bear you not to come too. Oh, Llew, I wish Mr. Parker knew'

But Mr. Parker did know; and he was a man who never forgot to be kind, and to do it in a nice way, too. So when the children went on Wednesday for their bread (Wednesday was the other day for going), before Stan had time to tell him, as he had made up his mind to do, he said:

'Clare, the infants are to have a treat next Wednesday, and I want a boy to help me get the tables ready, and make himself generally useful. Can you be there by three, do you think, and leave your crossing for once?'

'Yes, thank you, sir. I should like it very much indeed,' said Llew, 'if I may bring Stan with me; I can't leave him alone.'

'All right, my boy,' said Mr. Parker, 'all right—three, remember.'

There was not much chance of Llew's forgetting; and if he had forgotten, Stan would have reminded him, for it was the constant talk now.

78 The Young Crossing Sweepers.

'Won't it be jolly!' said Llew.

'Yes, won't it! said Stan; for now they were both going, it was something to look forward to.

But while our little boys knew it was all right about the treat, and while Miss Emerton knew, for she had found it out through Mr. Parker, the two little Seymours were in such distress to think of Llewellyn Clare's exclusion, that Mr. Seymour advised their mamma to buy a ticket for him; and he put his hand into his pocket then and there and took out a shilling for the purpose. And this seemed to the little girls just the right thing to have thought of, and just the right thing to do, and just like their papa—a dear, good man.

So the carriage was ordered—for it was Thursday now—and Mrs. Seymour drove to Miss Emerton's with the two little girls, only to find that there were other kind hearts in the world, and that Mr. Parker had given little Llew an invitation over-night.

X.

THE QUEER DREAM.

What was the treat to be? That was the question. Perhaps it was only tea with the teachers; for Llew had never seen such a sight, much less Stan.

There were four tables covered with nice white cloths, and on them flowers, and bread and butter—beautiful bread and butter, and cake, and little mugs down each side; and a teacher with all the requisites, at either end, to make tea.

About the room there were people to help. Llew was one, Mr. Parker was another, and there were several more besides.

A great many of the children were already seated at the tables; the rest were trooping in, ever so gay. Mrs. Seymour had just arrived with Ethel and Mary, and a present of half a sovereign towards the tea from her husband.

'What a nice face Mr. Parker has, Miss

Emerton, she said. 'Do you know I quite like paying my baker's bill; he seems always happy, and looks so fresh and good-tempered. I think I like the bread better because it comes from his shop,' she said, smiling.

'He is a very good man,' replied Miss Emerton, 'and I think myself it shows in his face. He is genuine and true, and I think all Sunday-school teachers look happy, Mrs. Seymour, don't you?'

'I think they should do so,' said Mrs. Seymour; 'and I know, at any rate, two who do—for Mr. Parker does, and so do you.'

'Yes, I think we feel so,' she said; 'we enjoy our work. I will look after your little girls, Mrs. Seymour.'

'At what time shall I send for them?'

'Oh, about half-past eight, I think,' replied Miss Emerton. But really there is no occasion; my father will send for me, and I can set them down as I pass, if you like.'

'Oh, thank you. Good-evening,' said Mrs. Seymour.

'Good-evening,' returned Miss Emerton, and then she placed the little girls at one of the tea-tables where Stan was seated, and went to speak to some of the other children.

In half an hour tea was finished, and Mr. Raynes, the superintendent, asked the teachers to move the tables and arrange the forms differently, so that the children should all look towards the magic-lantern.

And now Llew was called into requisition again, and told to take one end of a form while Mr. Parker took the other. Several teachers also set to work, and all was soon ready to begin.

'I shall throw a great many pictures on this sheet,' said Mr. Raynes, 'that will show you more quickly than I could tell you about the queer dream that we are to think of to-night. Will you like that?'

'Yes, sir,' Yes, sir,' from every little voice.

'Ah, I thought so; little children always like pictures. When I was a child I liked pictures too; and do you know, I am such a big baby as to like pictures even now!' At

which all the children laughed, as you mig expect. 'Well, the pictures I am going show you will be about a pilgrim; you kno what that means—a person on a journe We are all pilgrims, for we are all on journey-always, from the cradle to t grave. Now I want to show you how tl pilgrim got forward on his journey, and wh hindered him; and perhaps as I talk abo him you will see you are often troubled he was. I hope, if you are like him in 1 difficulties and temptations, you will be li him in his success; for you will find th notwithstanding all, he arrived safely at t city at last, and felt himself well repaid : all he had suffered on the journey. I name of the man who was going the journ was "Christian;" the name of the place fre which he was going was the "City of I struction;" the name of the place to which was going was the "City of Zion." But 1 fore I begin you shall sing, "I'm but stranger here, Heaven is my home." You know that, don't you?' (Here Llew a

Stan looked at one another, and smiled—as much as to say, 'Ah! don't we!') 'There is no need for me to give it out; just sing it through.'

The first picture that was thrown on the sheet was of a prison.

'The queer dream was had by a man named Bunyan, while he was shut up in this prison,' said Mr. Raynes. 'But first I must tell you he was not sent to prison because he was wicked, like some people, I am sorry to say, but because he was good. He would preach about Jesus, though he was told not to do so.' ('I like him for that,' thought Llew.) 'He called his dream "The Pilgrim's Progress."'

The next picture they saw was of a man with a heavy burden on his back; and a great many other pictures followed, which I have no doubt you have all seen, for most children know something of Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' And they were all very nicely explained by Mr. Raynes.

Some of the children liked one picture, and some another.

The picture that struck Llew the most was the one in which the burden fell off Christian's back at the sight of the Cross, and he saw it no more. He looked at it till the tears rolled down his face—he remembered the text his mother had given them: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And he thought to himself, 'It was love indeed!' And in his heart he thanked Him, that He eased us all of the burden of sin.

And there was one other picture that touched him very deeply too; it was Ignorance, bound hand and foot, being cast into the lake that burneth with fire. 'It was so sad,' he thought, 'that through want of knowledge anyone should have to go to Hell, even from the very gate of Heaven.'

'Oh,' thought Llew, 'I wish he had had a certificate of pardon for his sins, through that wonderful death on the Cross; for teacher said there was a free invitation to all to come. I wish he had known the right way

and been safe!' And the thought of that picture clung to him all through his life.

But perhaps the picture that amused Stan the most was the one in which Talkative was represented as going off in a pet. He thought he did look such a funny little man, just turning the corner.

And there was one picture that horrified him—the one of Apollyon: so that when he found, at last, that Christian was victorious, he was positively clamorous with delight—so much so that Llew was obliged to hush him.

Ethel and Mary were very much interested in the picture of Faithful's martyrdom. It reminded them of the picture in Fox's 'Book of Martyrs,' from which Miss Oliver, their governess, often read to them at home.

And all the little children seemed very pleased with their treat; and I think they all felt it was a solemn thing to be little pilgrims, and that the hymn they had sung at the beginning was a very true one.

So when Mr. Raynes said, 'We will sing "Father, take my hand," before we go, they

sang it as if they felt they needed it—and more especially the little Clares.

Then they each had an orange, and separated.

* * * * *

It is such a pretty hymn, I have written it down for those of you who may not know it; for some day you may feel very badly to want some one to take your hand, and then you will know how to act.

Hather, take my Hand.

The way is dark, my Father! Cloud upon cloud Is gathering thickly o'er my head, And loud the thunders roar above me, yet I stand Like one bewildered. Father, take my hand, And through the gloom lead safely home, Safely home, safely home,

Lead safely home Thy child,

The day declines, my Father! and the night Is drawing darkly down. My faithless sight Sees ghostly visions. Fears of a spectral band Encompass me. O Father take my hand, And from the night lead up to light,

Up to light, up to light, Lead up to light Thy child.

The way is long, my Father! and my soul Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal; While yet I journey through this weary land, Keep me from wandering. Father, take my hand, And in the way to endless day,
Endless day, endless day,
Lead safely on Thy child.

The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn Has pierced me, and my feet, all torn And bleeding, mark the way; yet Thy command Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand; Then safe and blest, oh lead to rest,

Lead to rest, lead to rest, Oh lead to rest Thy child.

XI.

THE LAST WALK.

- 'DID you have a nice lesson to-day, Llew?' said Stan.
- 'Yes, I did; it was about Lazarus. And teacher said that it pained the Lord to see us suffer, and lose our friends, but that He allowed it for our good. He spoke so prettily about His sympathy with us: and he said, too, that when Jesus felt a thing to be right, He always did it, even though it pained Him to do it; and that sometimes there was a good.

reason for our sufferings, though we could not see it at the time. And then he told us to follow Christ's example in three things:

- "To do always what was right;
- "To sympathise with all; and
- "To pray always in faith."

And such a beautiful hymn we had; we must read it when we get home.'

And they did read it. This is the first verse of it:

'When gathering clouds around I view, And days are dark, and friends are few, On Him I lean, who not in vain Experienced every human pain. He sees my wants, allays my fears, And counts and treasures up my tears.'

Then Llew said, 'Did you know your hymn, Stan?'

'Yes; teacher gave me another verse to learn, the last:

"God is in heaven; may I pray
To go there when I die?
Yes—love Him, seek Him, and one day
He'll call thee to the sky."

'All right,' said little Llew. 'What was the lesson about?'

'Oh, God's care of us, and how kind He is. It was like this:

'There was a piece of oak in teacher's hand, and a picture of Elijah being fed by the ravens to look at; and she asked us how to spell "oak," and said:

"O should stand for Our;

"A , , for Almighty;

"K " " for King."

'So it was "Our Almighty King;" and then she showed us how God was Elijah's Almighty King, and ours too. And that He took care of us all in ways that no one else could do, because He was Almighty. And then we sang, "Oh, how He loves."

'That was very pretty,' said Llew. 'You must tell me more about it after tea.'

And so he did.

Then they watered their little garden, as they called it; but it was a very dull little garden just now, for the rose and the daisies had ceased to flower, and the seeds had not yet sprung. So there were only snowdrops and euonymus plants to cheer them; but the crocuses were buried there, and would soon flower; and they could remember the daisies and the roses till they came again.

Well, then they set to work and lighted the fire, and put the kettle on, and brought out the candle, and drew the curtains, and took their tea, and had another happy Sunday evening.

But they never went to Sunday School together again; and Llew had great need of his last Sunday's lesson. For the wee Stan was ill; and he had to keep saying to himself, 'Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.' And he wondered often and often—and why? Then he thought of what his teacher had said about Mary and Martha, and how they wondered too, and almost thought it unkind, till they saw Jesus weep; and then they knew there must be another, and a kind reason.

And he thought to himself, 'Perhaps He is weeping for me too—but He knows it will be for the best.' Oh, so often he had to go over the lesson to be able to 'hold still;' but at last he found it was for the best, when his

poor heart could be quiet enough to listen to his Father's still small voice of love; and he felt his little brother was safe—'Safe in the arms of Jesus.'

XII.

STAN IS ILL.

'I'm so cold, Llew, so cold; come very close to me,' said Stan.

'Why, you're shivering; you must have some hot milk, and go to bed,' said the little mother-boy.

But the hot milk didn't do much good.

'I feel so nasty,' said the little fellow.

'Never mind, you've taken a bad cold. We won't go out to-morrow; we've got plenty of money to last a week, and you shall stay at home; and I'll stay by you till you're better, and be your nurse,' said his brother.

'Oh, that will be nice,' said little Stan.

'Yes, won't it be jolly! And we'll talk and sing, and have a fire. Yes, and a candle too, and a game of marbles if you like; and

you'll soon be all right again, because Sunday is coming.'

'Yes, I shall be well by Sunday. If not, teacher will come and see me, I know.'

But all dear little Llew's care could not get his brother well by Sunday. The cough got worse instead of better; and his teacher came to see why he was not at school, and said the doctor must be fetched. And so he was, and this is what he said:

'You are a dear little man; where did you get that nasty cough from. What, playing at marbles with a cough! Why, you must be shamming!' And then he played with him, and asked, 'Does it hurt you there?' and 'Does it hurt you there?'—everywhere but the right part.

Little Stan said, 'No,' and 'No,' and laughed.

But at last the doctor touched the right part, as if by accident, and said, 'Does it hurt you there, you rogue?'

^{&#}x27;Yes.'

^{&#}x27;What! it does? Nonsense!

Then he listened to his chest and back, and tickled him, and went away; but he put his face in again at the door before he quite left, and said, 'I shall see you again to-morrow, please God.'

When he got downstairs, he said, 'What did his parents die of?'

- 'Consumption,' was the reply.
- 'Ah, I thought so. What is the name of that elder one?'
 - 'He goes by the name of Llew.'
- 'Poor boy!' said the doctor. 'Good-morning!' and he was gone.

Llew was following him gently down the stairs, to ask if there was any fixed time to fetch the medicine, so he heard what passed, and it was quite enough for him. He scarcely knew how to get upstairs again; but he must keep up for Stan's sake. Was he not his mother's dying charge to him, and the only one left him on earth?

'Oh! he could not let him go, even for the beautiful City. What, let him go, and be all alone? It was like putting out his only light; he would be in the dark—a darkness so dense that it could almost be felt! He drove the thought from him; it was beyond possibility of endurance. He went back and played at marbles, and if a tear would come, he tossed it away, or turned his back and stirred the fire.

Poor little heart, it was not its first grief by a good many; but he knew full well where to go with his griefs, though he could not kneel for Stan to see it. He did not know whether Stan would like to go or not; it was so different when you were really going from when you talked and thought about it. Yet his heart went up in prayer even as he played at marbles; for he must tell Jesus, and ask Him not to take his little brother away.

'What a kind gentleman,' said little Stan; 'I'm glad he's coming again to-morrow. I like him; don't you, Llew?'

'Yes,' said Llew audibly; but to himself he thought, 'He would not be coming again to-morrow if he did not think him very ill, I know; for the doctor did not come as often

as that to mother until he thought she was very bad. "O Father, take my hand," thought little Llew, and that was like a hand-clasp to him: and then he remembered Stan's 'Thou, God, seest me,' and that did him good. And he added in his heart, 'Keep him as the apple of the eye, for Christ's sake,' and he felt better.

'You'll win, Stan,' he said, 'I see! Two more to you. Why, I never!'

'You have not got one for a long time, Llew; you are not thinking, I am sure.'

'Well, I will this time, then; I'll take a good aim. There's a stunner for you,' he said, as Stan cried, 'Three for you this time!'

But it was a great effort to keep up false appearances.

'I say, Stan,' he burst out (perhaps rather too suddenly), 'should you like to go to Jesus?' No answer came. 'Perhaps Jesus will take you to Himself soon. Should you like to go?'

A tear gathered in Stan's eye, and another followed, till at last the little eyes became too

full, and one trickled down his face, though he still played on.

- 'Perhaps you'd rather stay a little while?' said Llew.
- 'Yes, I should. I should not like to leave you; you would be all alone.'
 - 'Well, then, tell Jesus,' said Llew.
 - 'I have told Him,' he replied.
- 'Well, then, now He'll let you stay, if He thinks it's best for you. You have won, Stan. Have another?'
 - 'No, thank you.'
 - 'Well, rest a bit; it's nearly time for tea.'
 - 'Yes, Llew, it's nearly time for tea.'

So up jumped the little mother-boy, and went to the pump to fill the kettle, and the fresh air did him good; and he came back and bustled about, and put out the bread and butter—some fresh butter which Miss Emerton had sent them—and then ran along for half a pint of milk.

- 'We'll have some toast to-night for a treat, Stan,' said Llew.
 - 'Yes, do, Llew, do; it will be jolly.'
 When it was all ready the table was drawn

close up to the side of the bed, and they both enjoyed it very much.

'O God,' thought little Llew, 'if it should be the end of our teas! I couldn't bear it. I really couldn't. Oh dear, oh dear!' But he never said anything, and the tea-things were washed up and put carefully away.

'I want to come to the fire, Llew, and sit on your knee.'

'No, you mustn't—you really mustn't. You must wait and ask the doctor, when he comes to-morrow,' replied Llew, earnestly. 'You shall if he says "yes."'

'Then bring the hymn-book, and sing "Oh, how He loves," said Stan.

And so he did.

'Now let me read my verse that teacher set me—the last one.'

So they found out the words together as usual, and Stan knew a good many of them by this time, for they were so simple and often repeated, and Miss Emerton had so prettily explained them, that after his brother had read it he said:

'Now let me.' And with a very little hele he read—

"God is in heaven; may I pray
To go there when I die?
Yes—love Him, seek Him, and one day
He'll call thee to the sky."

'Now say teacher's two prayers, Llev said Stan.

'Well, you say them.'

"God be merciful to me a sinner," as "Keep me as the apple of the eye," sa Stan. 'And thank Thee for "Whosoev will, let him come;" for I want to come Thy beautiful Kingdom some day, but n without Llew; take care of Llew and brin him too, for Christ's sake.'

'Amen,' said Llew.

'Read out of the Bible about the beautif Kingdom, Llew; or tell it, will you?'

'I'll read it,' answered Llew; that we easier, poor child.

'Say your prayers now, Llew, and con into bed; I'm tired.'

'Very well,' said Llew, and he put out the candle and undressed, and poured out he little heart: and as one whom his moth

comforteth, the Lord comforted him. And he was comforted. And they slept.

XIII.

ALL ALONE.

THREE weeks had passed. People had been very kind to the little orphans. Mr. Parker had been there as often as Miss Emerton; and the Seymours, and little Ethel and Mary, had been; and no one ever came without leaving something. So the children never wanted for anything. In fact, they were better off for temporal comforts than they had been ever since their father's death; and that was now nearly eight years ago—before the wee Stan was born.

The doctor had just left, saying:

'I can do nothing more, there is nothing to do; he'll be gone before the morning, I think.'

And the poor little boy-mother scarcely knew how to act his part; only his heart was so tender over his charge, it taught him. And he was so like a mother, that when he felt he could not do any more, or bear any

more, he still went on doing and bearing, for it was harder still to leave it alone.

Presently his baby brother spoke to him:

'Bring me what I wrote for you last night in my copy-book—"God is love!"'

And he brought it.

'Never lose it, Llew,' he said. 'I wrote it for you when I was very tired. I wrote it to comfort you when I should be gone. I was afraid sometimes you might think it was unkind of God to take me away from you, so I wrote "God is love." Now I want to write one more verse, Llew, if I can; the last Mother said before she died: "My peace I leave with you." And, with much effort and many interruptions, it was completed. Now write yourself, Llew,' he said. 'I'm too tired.'

'Well, what shall I write?'

"Lo, I am with you alway;" and then you'll know when you feel very lonely that you're not alone."

'I shall remember it,' said Llew.

'No, write it,' he urged. 'You may forget it some day, and want it, Llew, when you have a bad day, like we did sometimes. Write it.'

So he wrote it.

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'Now put the book away, and talk to me,'he said, 'for I feel very ill. I think I'm dying.'

'I can't think of anything to say,' said poor Llew. He was choking with smothered sobs.

'Say what you said before; that comforted me,' said the child.

'Repeat it to yourself,' answered Llew.
'I CAN'T—so there!'

But his little motherly heart thought it saw a slight shrinking from the feeling of aloneness that there is in death; and it inspired him, and he said, through his tears, and yet beaming with delight at the happy thought:

'When you see Jesus, give my love to Him, Stan. Will you?'

It was enough. The look told that.

'Yes, I will,' he said; 'and to Mother too. Good-bye, Llew. I do love you. Good-bye, dear, dear Llew.'

'Good-bye,' sobbed the other, 'till we meet again.'

And he was gone.

XIV.

ALONE! BUT NOT ALONE.

It was a sorry, sorry sight to see the poor little fellow's grief. He had borne up so bravely all through—for the sake of his mother first, and then for his little brother's sake; but now there was no one to bear up for, and every day made his loneliness more manifest to him.

His teacher was there again, for he was a good man and true; he loved his Master, and delighted to serve Him. And had not the Master said, with that 'verily' which came from Him when His heart was most stirred, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me?

But still—where was his mother? and where was wee Stan? Where?

And now came the saddest day of all, when poor Llew must follow his little brother to the grave. He scarcely knew how to do it. Clouds did indeed gather round m, but God, the Comforter, soothed his

sorrows and allayed his fears. The child thought of his last Sunday-school lesson before Stan was taken ill, and he took up and claimed for his own the words of his last hymn:

- "When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend, Which covers all that was a friend, And from his hand, his voice, his smile, Divides me for a little while, My Saviour marks the tears I shed; For Jesus wept o'er Lazarus dead."
 - 'Yes,' he said.
- "The path is rough, my Father! Many a thorn Has pierced me; and my feet, all torn And bleeding, mark the way. Yet Thy command Bids me press forward. Father, take my hand; Then safe and blest, oh lead to rest, Lead to rest, lead to rest,

Oh lead to rest Thy child."'

And with all the tender endearment of which the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is capable, he comforted the child until he realised that, through *Him*, Jesus could be, and was with him, even now when his way seemed so dark and threatening: and though he stood like one bewildered, yet he felt his Father take his hand, and lead him on. And because of that hand-clasp he was kept from wandering, and every danger was safely passed.

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Little Llew saw again for a minute his father's and mother's coffins; and he felt he had given Stan safely back to his mother—and to Jesus. He would sooner leave him there than anywhere else. He knew he left him in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection, and he was glad he was safe in the arms of Jesus.

He could see the words glittering down there on his coffin, the words he had himself chosen to be placed there—'Safe in the arms of Jesus!'

Then the children of the infant class and the boys of Llew's class came forward (for they were all there—Ethel and Mary Seymour among them), and they saw the inscription too; and a great many of them read aloud, as they looked in, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus.' And then they didn't mind so much leaving him there, for they knew it was true,

Mr. Raynes' spoke very kindly about the little boy, and about his brother, and then the children sang the hymn, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and very quietly left the grave; for it was a very solemn funeral to them.

When Llew arrived at home, he found Miss Emerton's kind heart and hands had been busy again; and Mr. Parker came back with him, and stayed to tea, and read and prayed so beautifully for him that it quite comforted him. But the poor child needed it all!

Then he coaxed him into taking a little tea and dry toast, and made up his fire for him, and lighted his candle, and made him promise to go to bed soon, and rest; for he was very weary, as well as sad. And then he bade him good-bye, saying in his kindest and most sympathetic manner:

'Poor boy, I shall see you again to-morrow. Good-bye.'

And what did poor little Llew do as soon as he was gone, but fling himself on the bed just as he was, in all his clothes, and sob till you would have thought his little heart would break. But no, the great Comforter was by, and He knew better. Tears were the relief sent him for his pent-up sorrow. It was his mother's God comforting him, as one whom his mother comforteth.

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Yes, He was by.

After a little while he rose, and took out the copy-book: he thought he would print Stan's texts and hang them over the bed. But he had no card-board, so he read them, and stroked them (it was Stan's last request to him); and he waited for another day. And then he felt so lonely that he began to want his mother back again; he felt so like a little child with nothing to do in the world, and no one to care for; and his mother seemed nearer to him for his loss. He almost fancied she must be there—it was so strange to be quite alone.

Then his thoughts travelled on to the home of the blest, where his mother and Stan were, and he knelt down and thanked God for the happy prospect in store for him, and for his promise to be with him alway, even to the end. And he thanked Him for the peace His presence brought, and he told Him he knew and felt He was Love.

And then he slept, alone—but not alone; for his great Comforter was by.

The next day Mr. Parker came and asked him what he meant to do, now Stan was safe and happy, and there was no occasion to sweep a crossing any more for the sake of watching over him. He said, 'You have well fulfilled your charge, Clare, and I am sure both Jesus and your Mother will say, "Well done, good and faithful boy!" But I think if your Mother were here now, she would rather you chose some other occupation.'

'Yes, I think so too,' said Llew; 'but there is only one thing I should care to do, and that is to help to comfort and teach other little orphans. I should feel then I was still carrying on a work that Mother, and Stan, and Jesus would all like; and I know I should be happy in that myself. But I don't see how it is to be done.'

So Mr. Parker undertook to ask Mrs. Seymour what would be the best way to set about it. And Mrs. Seymour came after a few days with Ethel and Mary in her carriage; and it was agreed that I lew should go to school for three years, at Mr. Seymour's

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expense, and then he would be old enough to become a teacher in an Orphan Asylum.

And as all Llew's friends thought the sooner he had some regular occupation the better it would be for him, he went the following week to a school Mrs. Seymour chose for him.

But before he left he transplanted the little garden from the window to the grave, and added some forget-me-nots. So the garden, he thought, would still be between them. And he could not leave the unused flower-basket his mother had provided for the summer-flowers behind, so he took it to school with him, and always kept it under his bed.

Dear boys and girls, wherever you may be, if orphans in this world, with no other friend, remember you have a friend in God; for 'in Him the fatherless findeth mercy.'

'His mercy endureth for ever.'

THE END.

THE YOUNG CROSSING SWEEPERS.

'This little book will not only win its way by the charm of the story, but will touch many a young heart by its tenderness and its truthfulness. There is unusual power in one or two of the conversations. which are exquisite in their naturalness and their gentle religiousness. Children's books are, in our day, almost as plentiful as primroses; yet there does not seem to the little folks to be too many of either. This is one of those books that have the freshness of spring flowers on them, and so are sure of a welcome.'-Homilist.

'The tale entitled "The Young Crossing Sweepers" is written with great simplicity, and seems calculated to interest young people who are struggling with difficulties, and to suggest to their parents useful hints.'—Rev. John Stoughton, D.D.

"The Young Crossing Sweepers" has the great merit which many books written for children have not-viz., a plainness of style and language which cannot fail to be thoroughly understood and appreciated by youthful readers. I have no doubt many of the dear children for wash it is intended will much enjoy reading it, and also profit by its simple teaching. — Rev. John George Gregory, M.A., Incumbent of Emmanuel Church, Brighton.

'I thank you for your little book, "The Young Crossing Sweepers." you so kindly sent me. I am thankful to perceive that you are aiming to be a witness-bearer for our gracious Saviour; and I pray that your efforts and testimony may be abundantly blessed.'-Rev. Wm. Cadman.

A.7. Trinity Rectory, Marylebone and Prebendary of St. Paul's.

'We shall not describe Mrs. Olding's story; it is full of interest, and teaches a good lesson of life. "Norwich Argus.

'A gracious story, well adapted for distribution by those who seek the salvation of the young." Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

'"The Young Crossing Sweepers" must be a favourite. "Rev. Edwin

Paxton Hood.

"The Young Crossing Sweepers" is a story of two orphans religiously brought up, who never lost the influence of their training amid all their trials. It is simply written, and is adapted for quite

young children.'-Sunday School Chronicle.

'The authoress has accommodated herself to her task with remarkable success. The history of the lads is recited in touching language. and the lessons it is designed to inculcate are fraught with good. Brighton Guardian.

""The Young Crossing Sweepers" is a tale as simple and touching as "Jessica's First Prayer."'-Rev. Alexander Hamilton, M.A., D.D.,

Brighton.

'I have read "The Young Crossing Sweepers" with much interest.

The little work simplifies the Gospel and makes it clear to the comprehension of children, and presents it in a way calculated to impress and win the heart. I wish for it a large circulation, that it may bring many lambe into the fold of "the Good Shepherd."—Rev. Charles

Graham, London.

'Permit me to thank you cordially for "The Young Crossing Sweepers." It is not often we can read a book through at a sitting; but the size of the volume, the touching story it tells with so much tact, the earnest spirit in which it is written, and the practical lessons it inculcates upon the young—all combined to engage my sympathies to the end. I wish for it a wide circulation, and I pray that, by the blessing of God, it may be the means of winning many young persons to Jesus.—Rev. Robert Balgarnie, Scarboragh.

"The Young Crossing Sweepers" is a touching story, and well told. It cannot fail to do good to the class for whom it has been specially written. The tone of the book is excellent; and the narrative, in some of its parts, is most vivid and realistic. The authoress deserves grateful recognition and welcome among the writers who are aiming to benefit the young."—Rev. William Crosbie, M.A. LL.B. (London Uni-

versity).

'This little book ought to be in every Sunday School library in the

world.'-A Sunday School Superintendent.

'This little tale for children is told with appropriate simplicity. Incidentally to the tale, some Sunday School lessons are introduced, which we commend to those interested in the subject as particularly good, being based on an excellent plan.—Brighton Gazette.

'I can scarcely give you an idea of the effect of your little book upon our children: they were all in tears while I was reading it to

them.'- The Master of the Home for Orphan Boys, Brighton.

'A pathetic story of Wee Stan and little Llew, two orphans who had to sweep a crossing to gain a livelihood. The children will like it.— The Mother's Treasury.

"The Young Crossing Sweepers" is a touching story, and will interest great numbers—Sunday School teachers, mothers, and young

people.'-Rev. John Pulsford, Edinburgh.

We can heartily recommend "The Young Crossing Sweepers" as a glist-book to children, and as entitled to a place in the Sunday School alibrary. It is worthy of praise because of the admirable lessons it contains, bound up as they are in a simple and unvarnished narrative, which nevertheless conveys the most precious and saving truths of the Gospel. On reading this pathetic account of the daily life of these two orphan children, one is almost tempted to accept it in the light of a very beautiful but overdrawn picture; and the authoress has left us in the dark as to how far the incidents it records are founded upon fact. — Grantham Journal.

'This touching little story will go straight to the heart of every father and mother with little children to leave behind. It is raised far above the common run of children's books by the absolute and literal Sermon-on-the-Mount trustfulness in the love and providence of our Father in Heaven which breathes in every page of it, and it deserves to take rank with the children's books of George Macdonald

and Mark Evans—especially the latter's "The Story of our Father's Love." Parents who want to make their children's religion a living and loving realisation of the love of God will be happy to see this little book in their hands, and will rejoice in the eagerness with which children devour it from beginning to end—experio crede.'—Rev. Thomas J. Berwick, M.A., Head Master of the Grammar School, Buntingford, Herts.

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By Mrs. Olding.

'This wonderfully cheap birthday-book is the very thing wanted for a present for young people—the selections have been made with so much taste and judgment. A child cannot too soon begin to learn, day by day, such classical masterpieces as crop up in turning over the leaves—e.g., Cowper's magnificent lines beginning 'He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,' combining, as they do, the highest poetry and a whole system of theology. The writer should carry out the excellent idea with the works of living poets.'—
Rev. Thomas J. Berwick, M.A., Head Master of the Grammar School, Buntingford, Herts.

'Your extracts are certainly made with great tastefulness and judgment.'—Rev. Samuel G. Green, D.D.

"The "Poetical Weeks" contain a judicious and tasteful selection of

extracts.'—Rev. John Stoughton, D.D.
""The Birthday Book of Poetical Weeks" is a gem,'—Rev. Edwin

Paxton Hood.

'This is one of the daintiest, prettiest little books of the kind we have ever seen. The authoress has selected fifty different poets, and culled from their works seven different passages to represent a week; to these she has added special extracts for preface and seasons. The selection has been made with great care and taste, and none but a refined mind, one that is in thorough harmony with the divine gift of poetry, could have performed such a task so gracefully and so well. The book is nicely printed and bound, and the style altogother betokens rich and delicate taste. "Norvich Argus.

'Mrs. Olding has made selections from fifty-two of the standard poets, each contributing seven extracts, and thus supplying poetical material for a week; the poets run alphabetically through the volume, commencing with Akenside and ending with Young, and the extracts show cultivated taste and judgment. "Sussex Daily

News.

The nature and intention of this neatly-got-up little work are sufficiently indicated in the title; and among all the various books of the kind, we have seen none which can compare with it in the judicious selection of poetical quotations, which evince not only an

extensive acquaintance with the poets, but the rare quality of discrimination of selection from their works the most beautiful and most appropriate for such a work as the present. It is not merely a book for the year, but as it will contain a record of the natal days of friends and relations, it may be denominated "a book for all time."

-Brighton Examiner.

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Although the market has been fairly flooded with publications of a like description to the one under notice, yet Mrs. Olding's compilation of the thoughts of the best of the poets has been so judicious, arranged with such good taste, and bound up in so charming a manner, that we feel sure the little volume will soon be found in many a drawing-room. It would constitute a very acceptable giftbook. The selections are chosen from a cycle of poets, and, in addition to the customary quotation for each day of *:.) year, extracts for the season are given at the opening of each mouth. We trust the demands for it will be, in some measure, commensurate

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A more charming little gift-book could not be found. It is, in effect, a setting of some of the brightest gens of English poetry, from Chaucer to Longfellow. Tennyson is not represented, probably owing to the exigencies of copyright; but when Chaucer and Spenser, Cowper, Dryden, Burns, Shakespeare, Shelley, Thomson, and Kests are found in close companionship, to say nothing of dozens of others, Tennyson may well be spared. If for no other reason this dainty little birthday-book is very welcome as reminding everyone in whose hands it may fall of the richness, freshness, variety, and purity of English poetry. In this respect it should have precedence over those books which, whilst similar in character, are devoted solely to one single poet. — Brighton Herald.

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